

The Dying Year.

BY MRS. L. Y. HAULMAN.

FAREWELL, Old Year! we turn to trace
The features of thy well-known face,
To trace the paths thy feet have pressed;
We count thy gifts of happy day
And sunlit hour, and softly say
Old friends are best.

Farewell! we fain would stay thy flight;
Too swiftly goes thy dying night;
Yet thou hast blighted and has blost,
Within our cup the bitter bay
Hast sometimes mixed, but still we say,
Old friends are best.

Farewell, Old Year! we now thee know;
Thy mystic writing on thy brow,
The hieroglyphics on thy breast
Have all been read; we fear no more,
And sigh to think thy reign is o'er—
Old friends are best.

Go, thou Old Year—day cometh fast—
To that dim land we call the past;
That ghostly land, by shade oppressed,
Capricious wast thou—cold and kind;
But yet, we trembling fear to find
Old friends are best.

Welcome, sweet guest in garments white,
Who at the turning of the night
Lift'st the dropped crown upon thy head,
Bring happy wish and happy smile,
Bring bounding heart of hope, the while
We greet the glad New Year.

Her hands are in her garments' fold,
Her scroll she holdeth all unrolled;
What mystic story will it tell?
What gift hath she? Her fingers white
May hold for us a crown of light,
Or clasp an asphodel.

Unmoved, her rosy finger-tips
Keep the closed book; her smiling lips
Drop not one word, so calm she stands;
We can but trust a guest so fair,
Her fateful wisdom would not share,
Or see her hidden hands.

A Helpful New Year's Mystery.

SOME one had sent Mrs. Sharpley a turkey; and she had no more idea who the giver could be than as if it had come from the man in the moon.

It must have been intended, too, as a New Year's gift, as it arrived the day before; and such a fine, plump turkey as it was!

Mrs. Sharpley had several times made mental calculations with a view to deciding whether or not she could afford a turkey, or perhaps a chicken, for her solitary dinner the next day, especially as she was sick on Christmas Day and so indulged in nothing richer than gruel; but poultry was high and her receipts small, so she had decided, perforce, that a chop or a bit of steak would do.

Mrs. Sharpley had been indulging in some rather bitter reflections during the closing weeks of the year, and their result had been visible in her manner and speech, although she was probably not aware of it.

Her life was a lonely one, and full of exertion, as there was no one to in the sharp constant struggle for daily bread.

She imagined Mr. Stock, the provision dealer, did not care much for her small trade, and regarded her as rather a bore, although he was polite and attentive enough, for that matter.

Then Mr. Pounds, the grocer, always mentioned the price of his cheapest things when she went there, as if of course she couldn't afford the best, and the worst of it was, she couldn't. So she allowed herself to feel a little sore and sensitive towards both the butcher and the grocer.

But little Miss Styles, who lived opposite, had committed a positive grievance. She once actually proposed altering over Mrs. Sharpley's bonnet for nothing, "just as a neighbour, you know," she said, half apologetically, when making the presuming offer.

Mrs. Sharpley knew the little milliner had been eyeing her home-made bonnet rather closely, and as she had about as much lack of taste in such matters as the milliner had supply of that useful commodity, of course the bonnet looked queer to the skilled vision of the latter. But then Miss Styles was evidently taken quite aback by the prompt, not to say indignant, refusal with which her offer was met.

But now that the main part of a nice dinner had been so kindly and unexpectedly furnished, the widow at once concluded to get some vegetables, also to make a small plum-pudding. And, moreover, she felt aware that her feelings had undergone some subtle and sudden change towards all her acquaintances. She concluded that after all Mr. Stock might think more of her little patronage than she thought of. And like as not he was the very man who sent the turkey! Or, perhaps Mr. Pounds, who raised poultry and sold it in the market, might have considered her reduced circumstances and sent it himself out of the kindness of his heart.

At all events, having made satisfactory arrangements as to what she would have for dinner the next day, Mrs. Sharpley, naturally kind-hearted and social, next resolved she never could enjoy revelling in such luxury all by herself.

But whom invite to the feast?

She kept thinking of the little milliner over the way, and fancying how it might cheer her up spending New Year's day out, and having a nice turkey dinner. And perhaps she didn't mean to be insulting about the matter of the bonnet, she seemed like a nice enough little lady, and certainly had nice customers; and so at length Miss Styles was invited and really accepted so kind an invitation.

In vain Mrs. Sharpley quizzed first the market man's then the grocer's boy as to where they carried turkeys the day before; either they were obtuse and could not understand the drift of her inquiries, or else they knew more than they wished to tell.

But the dinner was delightful. Little Miss Styles proved herself so agreeable a companion that Mrs. Sharpley secretly promised herself many future visits from the dear little woman. She knew now nothing amiss was intended about her poor old bonnet, and even went so far as to consult

Miss Styles about its further renovation. And the milliner, without foolish ado, began at once to rearrange and retrim the dilapidated structure, declaring that next to a splendid dinner, she *did* enjoy putting on bonnets.

In short, the little visit was the beginning of a friendship which became a great blessing to both ladies.

After a while Mrs. Sharpley, so sure in her own mind that Mr. Stock sent the turkey, that when his boy was taken down dangerously ill, insisted on being allowed to watch with him three nights, and the last night of her watch the fever turned and recovery was speedy. Then the grateful provision dealer told everybody that Mrs. Sharpley had the kindest heart, and was the best nurse of any one he knew; and sundry packages received at different times from Mr. Stock's best supplies warranted and induced repeated visits from the genial little milliner to her opposite neighbour.

But, strange to tell, Mr. Pounds' little girl fell sick almost as soon as the little Stock boy got well. And Mrs. Sharpley was seized with a sudden conviction that after all it was the grocer who sent that turkey. Anyway, she would serve the two dealers alike; and her prompt offer to watch with the little suffering Pounds child was gratefully accepted. And after a tedious illness the child rallied back to health and strength again.

Then it was that when Mrs. Sharpley asked for anything in the grocer's store she was not informed of the real price at all, but the choicest of any kind she happened to ask for was at once put up. And the way Mr. Pounds did act about the pay! Didn't charge what even second or third rate goods were really worth, but would say after putting up a dollar's worth or more of things, "Well, give me a quarter if you like, that's all I'll take anyway." And when Mrs. Sharpley hinted that she should feel delicate about trading with him if he would not take more pay, he told her if she traded elsewhere he should only keep sending things he thought she needed without any pay at all.

But still the matter of the turkey remained a mystery. And what was more, Mrs. Sharpley never really knew who sent it.

The fact was, the whole thing was simply a mistake. A wealthy lady, who lived a mile or more from Mrs. Sharpley, failed to receive her New Year's dinner as expected. But when she appeared at the up-town market where she traded, to discover, if possible, the reason why she was neglected or overlooked, it was impossible to trace the matter. Three boys had been busy all the day previous running errands and filling out orders. Whether a turkey had been sent her or not was uncertain; but there were plenty other nice ones on hand, and a right royal looking bird was forwarded forthwith to her spacious dwelling.

But only to think of all the good that resulted from a poor, lonely, nearly discouraged woman having been, as she thought, kindly noticed by some one better off than herself! It really seems well worth one's while to try the effect of benefiting some person poorer off than one's self.

Mrs. Sharpley was another woman from the time that big turkey entered her door; and had it been only a chicken, the tendency would have been the same.

Of course we know that God sent the widow the good, cheering meal, and its consequent pleasant results, although, alas! no one was credited on the celestial records with having performed the good deed.

But how beautiful it must be to be able to make one of God's creatures so happy, and such an acceptable way to begin a New Year! So much like the dear, loving Saviour who, when here upon earth, went about doing good!—
Golden Rule.

What Our Patrons Say.

ONE of the greatest gratifications of Editorial life is the marks of appreciation of one's labours, and the kindly greetings and expressions of approval one receives from unknown correspondents. We have had many such expressions, for which we feel very grateful. We have to take the liberty to quote part of one such letter from a gentleman who occupies a distinguished educational position, but with whom we have not the pleasure of being personally acquainted:—

"I can assure you," he says, "that we fully appreciate the efforts you are putting forth to supply the people of this Dominion, and particularly the Methodist portion of it, with a Magazine possessed of real literary merit, and pervaded by a pure and high religious tone. In these days when so many of our young people are having their minds poisoned, and their religious feelings deadened, by reading publications of doubtful orthodoxy, and thinly disguised sceptical tendencies, it is very gratifying to find your Magazine standing firmly by the grand old truths of the gospel. I have found this Magazine an invaluable assistant in the education of my family, by cultivating in the younger members a love for reading, and at the same time indelibly impressing upon their minds the great fundamental truths of our common Christianity. I am strongly in sympathy with the object you have in view. We are anticipating a pleasant time from the monthly visits of your Magazine, and trust that it will surely work its way into every Methodist, and, I may say, Christian, family in the land."

From the fact that most of our patrons continue to subscribe for the Magazine year after year, many of them from its very beginning, we judge that the opinion above expressed is not an exceptional one.